Interacting with NON-MUSLIM PARENTS

A GUIDE FOR THE NEW MUSLIM

كيفية التعامل مع الأبوين غير المسلمين

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Interacting with Non-Muslim Parents: A guidance for the New Muslim

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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All praises belong to Allah the Lord of all that exists. I bear witness that nothing has the right to be worshipped except for Allah alone without partners, and I bear witness that Muhammad is his slave and Messenger. May the prayers and peace be upon him, and his family and his companions, collectively. As to what follows:

The discussion pertaining to honoring the parents is an extremely tremendous affair. That is made apparent as Allah connects the rights of the parents with His rights, in numerous places in the Noble Quran. Such as His statement:

(وَقَضَى رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا)

And your Lord has decreed that you worship none but Him. And that you be dutiful to your parents.
(Soorah Al Isra 17:23)

And Allah the Exalted said:

(وَاعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا)

Worship Allah and join none with Him in worship, and do good to parents.
(Soorah An Nisa 4:36)

And His statement:

(قُلْ تَعَالَوْا أَتْلُ مَا حَرَّمَ رَبُّكُمْ عَلَيْكُمْ أَلَّا تُشْرِكُوا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا)

Say (O Muhammad): "Come, I will recite what your Lord has prohibited you from: Join not anything in worship with Him; be good and dutiful to your parents.
(Soorah Al An'am 6:151)

And the Statement of the Exalted:

﴿أَنِ اشْكُرْ لِي وَلِوَالِدَيْكَ﴾

And We have enjoined on man (to be dutiful and good) to his parents.
(Soorah Luqman 31:14)

Thus all of this is clear proof upon the great rights of the parents and the obligation to honor them and show them kindness. And it is a warning against disobeying them and treating them harshly.

The topic of kindness to parents is a very broad topic, but based upon the desires of the noble brothers the topic will be restricted to: Showing kindness to the parents if they are not upon Islam and they are upon polytheism. Likewise: How should the new Muslim interact with his non-Muslim parents?

There is no doubt that the one who is new to Islam is in dire need to be taught the religion and given direction in this area such that his interaction with his parents will be upon clarity and knowledge. This must be based upon the religion of Allah the Blessed and Exalted not an inclination towards what he thinks if from the religion of Allah the Blessed and Exalted; and as a result he errors wronging himself and he interacts with his parents in an evil manner.

Allah the Exalted explains in the Noble Quran the necessary interaction between the Muslim child and the non-Muslim parents. This can be found in Soorah Al-`Ankabut when Allah the Blessed and Exalted said:

﴿وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ (8) وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّالِحِينَ (9) ﴾

And We have enjoined on man goodness to parents, but if they strive to make you join with Me (in worship) anything (as a partner) of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not. Unto Me is your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do.
And those who believe and do righteous deeds - We will surely admit them among the righteous [into Paradise]
(Soorah Al-`Ankabut 29:8-9)

He began these verses by enjoining upon man kindness to his parents. He said:

(وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَالِدَيْهِ حُسْنًا)

And We have enjoined on man goodness to parents

His statement 'goodness' entails goodness in every sense of the word from the statements and actions. This means he interacts with his parents with good speech, good words, and speech which is appropriate for their status and befitting to their position. And he should interact with them by serving them, aiding and assisting them, and taking care of his parent's needs. This advice is general to include every type of kindness and every path of goodness. He said:

(وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ)

But if they strive to make you join with Me (in worship) anything (as a partner) of which you have no knowledge

Meaning if the parents are upon polytheism and disbelief in Allah and they strive to make their child associate partners with Allah and disbelieve in Allah. And the meaning of 'make jihad or strive' is to put forth great effort and continuously urge and request their child to return to polytheism and disbelief in Allah the Blessed and Exalted. He said:

(وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ)

But if they strive to make you join with Me (in worship) anything (as a partner) of which you have no knowledge
(Soorah Al-`Ankabut 29:8)

The statement of Allah the Exalted: 'of which you have no knowledge'; this is the necessary description for polytheism because no one has any knowledge which legitimizes polytheism. Polytheism (shirk) is false and there is no authentic knowledge to be found with legitimizes shirk. Thus the polytheist and those with corrupt beliefs have absolutely no proof or knowledge which proves what they are upon is correct. No

one has proof for the correctness of polytheism, because all of it is false, misguidance and corruption. This is similar to the statement of Allah the Exalted:

(وَمَنْ يَدْعُ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ لَا بُرْهَانَ لَهُ بِهِ)

And whoever invokes besides Allah another deity for which he has no proof –
(Soorah Al Muminoon 23:117)

This is a necessary description of shirk which it is never void of.

He said:

(وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ لِتُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا)

But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not.
(Soorah Al-`Ankabut 29:8)

Meaning if they call you to polytheism and disbelief in Allah 'then obey them not'; meaning do not obey your parents when they order you to associate partners with Allah the Exalted.

He said, 'then obey them not' and He did not say, 'then disobey them'. This means it is required from the child to be good to his parents and interact with his parents in a kind manner but he does not obey them in the polytheism and disbelief which they are calling him to. But if they request kindness or assistance from him then it is upon him to obey them in that. This is clarified in Soorah Luqman. Allah the Blessed and Exalted said:

(وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا وَصَاحِبْهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا)

But if they (both) strive with you to make you join in worship with Me others that of which you have no knowledge, then obey them not, but behave with them in the world kindly.
(Soorah Luqman 31:15)

Thus He commanded giving the parents good companionship in this world; meaning give consideration to their previous kindness and goodness (shown to you); and the compassion of the mother and the money spent by the father. Do not forget this; rather be diligent in showing them good kind companionship. But do not obey them unrestrictedly in what they command you, in associating partners with Allah. He completed this verse with His statement:

(إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ)

Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do.

This is an incentive as well as a threat. It is an incentive for those who are good to their parents that Allah the Glorified and Exalted will give him a great reward for that. And it is also a threat for the disbelieving parents if they remain upon their polytheism because of the punishment awaiting the disbelievers on the Day of Judgment. As for the one who is patient upon Tawheed and faith and he is not affected by his parents, and the polytheism they call him to; and he gives his parents good companionship in this world he will have a praiseworthy ending and a good result. For this reason Allah said in the following verse:

(وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ لَنُدْخِلَنَّهُمْ فِي الصَّالِحِينَ)

And those who believe and do righteous deeds - We will surely admit them among the righteous [into Paradise]

And this is an advice for those in this situation to remain patient upon faith and upon the religion and to not be affected by his parents in any way, by the polytheism and disbelief they call him to.

And then it is upon the child to spare no effort in guiding his parents to this religion and to strive diligently in this with gentleness, kindness, and continuation supplication and asking Allah the Exalted to guide his parents. He should pray during the night—as much as Allah wills—and supplicate for his parents. He should supplicate while in sujood during his obligatory and supererogatory prayers for Allah to guide his parents. Thus he combined giving Dawah to his parents and making Dua'a for them. He supplicates to Allah and he

invites his parents to Islam with gentleness and a kind word as Abu Huraira did with his mother—may Allah be pleased with him.

The story is in Sahih Muslim, and it is a tremendously great story. He said:

I invited my mother—who was a polytheist—to Islam. I invited her one day and she said to me something about the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him, which I hated. I came to the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him weeping and said: O Messenger of Allah, I invited my mother to Islam but she did not accept (my invitation). I invited her today but she said to me something which I did not like. Supplicate Allah that He may guide the mother of Abu Huraira to Islam.

Thereupon the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him said: O Allah, guide the mother of Abu Huraira. I came out quite pleased with the supplication of the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him and when I came near the door it was closed from within. My mother heard the noise of my footsteps and she said: Abu Huraira, just wait, and I heard the noise of falling of water. She took a bath and put on the shirt and quickly covered her head with a headdress and opened the door and then said: Abu Huraira, I bear witness that nothing has the right to be worshipped except for Allah and Muhammad is His slave and His Messenger.

He (Abu Huraira) said: I went back to the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him and (this time) I was shedding the tears of joy. I said: O Messenger of Allah, be happy, for Allah has responded to your supplication and He has guided the mother of Abu Huraira. He (the Prophet) praised Allah, and glorified Him and uttered good words. I said: O Messenger of Allah, supplicate to Allah so that He may instil love of me and that of my mother into the believing servants and let our hearts be filled with their love, whereupon Allah's Messenger peace be upon him said: O Allah, let there be love of these servants of yours, i. e. Abu Huraira and his mother, in the hearts of the believing servants and let their hearts be filled with the love of the believing servants. (Abu Huraira said: This prayer) was so well granted by Allah

that no believer was ever born who heard of me and who saw me except that he loved me.[1]

Therefore this great story is a methodology for the Muslim who has been tested by one or two disbelieving parents; so he can proceed as Abu Huraira proceeded with his mother by supplicating to Allah to guide them and also giving them Dawah with kindness and good words. Good interaction with the parents and taking into account good manners with them, softness in dealing with them, and being a good companion with them as much as possible is from the reasons for the parents to be guided to Islam.

Some of the youth make a mistake when they enter into Islam, thus they distance themselves from their parents or they disassociate from them or they do not visit them, or treat them kindly. And no doubt this is a mistake. It is required for him to be a good companion to his parents and to strive to be kind to his parents. And he should not obey them if they call him to disbelief and associating partners with Allah the Exalted. And there is no contradiction between these two affairs. There is no contradiction between being a good companion to the parents while at the same time not obeying them in their call to associating partners with Allah the Exalted.

I call upon every Muslim who has been tested with one or two parents who are disbelievers to read Soorah Luqman and also Soorah Soorah Al-`Ankabut and also the statements of the scholars in the books of tafsir explaining the meaning of these verses and the direction extracted from them in showing kindness and goodness to the parents; while avoiding their call to polytheism and disbelief in Allah the Exalted.

This is the conclusion of this subject. I ask Allah the Generous the Lord of the great throne by His Beautiful Names and Lofty Attributes to benefit us all from what He has taught us, and to rectify all of our conditions. And I ask Him to guide us to the straight path, and to not leave us to ourselves even for the blink of an eye. Verily the Blessed and Exalted responds to the supplication and He is the One hope is placed in and the best to rely upon. And Allah knows best. May the

[1] Collected by Muslim 2491

prayers and peace of Allah be upon His slave, His Messenger, and our Prophet Muhammad, and upon his family and his companions.